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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7378

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 001508

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL IZ IR

SUBJECT: MAYSAN GOVERNOR REACHES OUT

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/REL MNF-I) Summary: On May 13, incoming Maysan PRT leader held an introductory meeting with Maysan governor Adel Mahoder Radhi al-Maliki in Baghdad, at the Governor's request. Governor Maliki praised work done by the PRT to date, and expressed a desire for more significant USG funding toward major infrastructure projects in his province. When pressed on the urgent need for improved security and provincial access for the PRT, Maliki stated that he hoped that no inflexible decisions would be made regarding Maysan, a likely reference to his discomfort over widespread rumors of an impending military incursion. End summary.

¶2. (S/REL MNF-I) Governor al-Maliki stepped quickly through initial pleasantries at Baghdad's al-Rasheed Hotel to set out his vision for Maysan's development. While he first highlighted the necessity of strengthening institutions through bottom-up fostering of improved human capacity, he quickly shifted gears by laying out a laundry list of major infrastructure projects which he feels would be suitable for USG funding, these included a surgical hospital for Amarah, a 400Kva electrical generating station, construction of two model schools, and road, factory, and waste recycling investment. Expressing frustration that Maysan had not received recent USG funding for major projects, Maliki contended that the slowness of the PRT/USG funding process caused provincial budgeting difficulties. He also presented a suspect argument to allow the provincial government to administer and empower local engineers to oversee projects, claiming that this would minimize corruption. Governor Maliki did not reply to a call to use Iraqi money for such projects or to demonstrate a real desire for cost-sharing arrangements.

¶3. (S/REL MNF-I) In response to a call to improve provincial security and provide safe access to the PRT, the Governor noted that his security advisor has been working closely with the Regional Security Office at Tallil Air Base. (Note: Maysani officials have discussed access into the province with RSO, but to date have insisted that access can only be granted to an unarmed, low-profile PRT contingent. This arrangement is not acceptable at this time for the USG. End note) When pushed that Ambassador Crocker was anxious for tangible progress on access, Maliki countered that he would continue to work with his advisors, but that he hoped no inflexible decision would be made by the USG.

Comment

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¶4. (S/REL MNF-I) Governor Maliki's request to meet with the incoming PRT leader in Baghdad, made through the PRT under the auspices of discussing electricity solutions for the province, appears to have been an attempt to obtain essential-service deliverables that he could exploit in the run-up to provincial elections. His blatant outreach, and appeal that the USG not make an "inflexible decision," hint at his growing disquiet over the common belief that military action, to disarm JAM and other militia elements in Maysan,

is imminent.  
CROCKER